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maternal kin sketched in above. Another contrast between the conjugal family and the extended family is that the former is essentially unstable, it may be broken up by divorce or migration, whereas the extended family is a permanent body, having, as we have seen, the properties of a corporate social structure.

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The extended family of the Asiatic steppe is a diachronically oriented family. Such a family does not live for the present; it has received its birth, its being, its titles, honors, wealth, in short, its social position and status and property rights, from the past, from the ancestors, and holds them in trust for the future generations who will in turn honor the present locum tenens as an ancestor. The ancestors are honored and worshipped, not as genitors, those who have given birth to one, but as forebears, those who have kept the line of descent alive and maintained it across the generations, across time, diachronically. Thus the family corporeal and incorporeal property is not at all to be regarded as private property, nor even as the common, collective property of the congeners of the family. The entire patrimony is a trust to be held for the future, just as the family and lineage ancestors maintained the being of the line and its patrimony in trust for those yet to come. The practice of the levirate; the practice whereby children of an un-remarried widow belong to the family of the deceased husband regardless of who the actual sire is; the practice of adoption, of polygyny, all serve to maintain the line.

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